REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

A. General

In response to the Examiner's Office Action mailed July 9, 2008, claims 48 and 50-116 have been canceled, and new claims 117-127 have been added. Favorable consideration of the newly added claims is requested for the reasons set forth below.

B. Summary of Rejection and Reply

The invention relates to an automated system for invoice management which enforces two specific procedures before payment of the invoice can be made. The first procedure is the invoice approval procedure. The second procedure is the payment authorization procedure. The new claims focus on a feature of the invention that is not found in either Virgin, deGroeve or any of the prior art documents on record.

Typically, in a business organization using an automated system for invoice management, the invoice approval procedure and the invoice authorization procedure are under the responsibility of different individuals. The first individual that would have knowledge of the invoice would approve the invoice. The approved invoice is then passed to a second individual who is responsible for payment authorization. That individual can then authorize payment on the basis of the previously approved invoice.

The claims of the application focus on a dynamically adaptable user interface tool that facilitates the invoice approval and the payment authorization processes, in the sense that it prevents (1) a user from inadvertently approving an invoice when the user has no such privileges, (2) authorizing payment of an invoice when the invoice has not yet been approved and (3) authorizing payment of an invoice when the user has no credentials for doing so.

The dynamically adaptable user interface tool has two input options with relation to a certain invoice that is being processed. The selection of the first input option approves the invoice while the selection of the second input option authorizes payment of the invoice.

The first input option or the second input option can be selectively de-activated depending on the particular circumstances to ensure that the invoice is properly approved first and then the payment is authorized. More particularly:

1. The first input option is deactivated when the user has no appropriate privileges (not allowed to approve invoices).

2. The second input option, the one allowing the payment of an invoice to be authorized is deactivated when the user has no appropriate privileges (not allowed to authorize payment) and also when the invoice has not yet been approved. The status of the invoice approval is determined on the basis of information in a database. Specifically, the database is associated with the entity that generates the invoice and it stores a record associated with the invoice. The record has multiple data elements, one of them including information about the status of the invoice approval. It is on the basis of that information that the second input option of the user interface is deactivated.

None of the cited references discloses or even remotely suggests the dynamically adaptable user interface with selectively deactivatable input options.

Specifically, deGroeve discloses an accounts receivable and an accounts payable system where invoices can be separately approved and then payment authorized. The manner in which invoices can be reviewed is described in connection with Figure 7 of the reference which illustrates a GUI that provides different invoice review functions. However, none of these even remotely suggests using selectively deactivatable user interface options.

The same comments can be made in connection with Virgin and Neely, the other references cited by the Examiner.

New independent claim 117 specifically requires:
   "…..
         f. *selectively deactivating:*
               i. *the first input option on the basis of the user credentials data when the user credentials data indicates that the user does not possess invoice approval privileges;*

       ii. the second input option on the basis of the user credentials data when the user credentials data indicates that the user does not possess payment authorization privileges;

       iii. the second input option on the basis of information in the invoice approval status data element, wherein the information in the invoice approval status data element indicates that the invoice has not been approved;

    g. in response to selection by the user of the first input option, transmitting data from the computer unit to the database to modify the invoice approval status data element to indicate that the payment of the invoice has been approved."

None of deGroeve, Virgin or Neely specifically teaches nor remotely suggests the selective deactivation of a user interface option to approve payment of the invoice on the basis of information in the invoice approval status data element. Accordingly, this limitation clearly distinguishes the claim from the prior art and on that basis the claim should be allowed.

New claims 118 to 121 incorporate the subject matter of claim 117 and as such they should be allowable as well.

In addition, none of the cited references teach or suggest the features explicitly claimed in dependent claim 118 that requires selectively deactivating the first input option on the basis of the user credentials data when the user credentials data indicates that the user does not possess invoice approval privileges while possessing invoice payment authorization privileges.

Moreover, none of the cited references teach or suggest the features explicitly claimed in dependent claim 119 that requires selectively deactivating the second input option on the basis of the user credentials data when the user credentials data indicates that the user does not possess invoice payment authorization privileges while possessing invoice approval privileges.

New independent claim 124, requires:

"........

    i. the dynamically adaptable user interface selectively deactivating:

       1. the first input option on the basis of user credentials data entered by the user at the computing apparatus, when the user credentials data indicates that the user does not possess invoice approval privileges;

2. *the second input options on the basis of the user credentials data when the user credentials data indicates that the user does not possess payment authorization privileges;*
3. *the second input option on the basis of data received via the I/O from a remote database indicating that the invoice has not been approved.*

As in the case with claim 117, the limitations presented in claim 124 are clearly not present in the prior art. Claims 125-127 depend from claim 124 and are allowable as well.

Claims 126 and claims 127 are similar to claims 118 and 119 and similar arguments can also be presented in support of those claims.

<u>CONCLUSION</u>

A sincere and earnest effort to respond to the Examiner's Office Action and to place this application into condition for allowance has been made by Applicant and the undersigned. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of the subject claims are respectfully requested.

If, upon consideration of the above, the Examiner should feel that there remain outstanding issues in the present application that could be resolved, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number given below to discuss such issues.

A petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 is being made concurrently with the electronic filing of this response. To the extent additional time or fees are required in connection with this response, please consider this response as a request for same and charge any fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 02-1010 (32423/82536) and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

<div align="center">Respectfully submitted,</div>

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